

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7572

UNCLAS MOSCOW 3452

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN UR

SUBJ: ACCESS TO SITE OF AIR INCIDENT

REF: MOSCOW 11125, 31 OCT 72

1. OM MARCH 28 ECON/ COMM COUNSELOR AND PAN AMERICAN MOSCOW REPRESENTATIVE CORNING CALLED AT MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (MCA) TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF ACCESS TO SITE OF AIR INCIDENT. SPEAKING FOR SOVIET SIDE WAS DEPUTY CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF MCAN, K. A. AKSENOV. EMBOFF SPOKE FROM STANDPOINT OF EMBASSY POINTING OUT THAT BASICALLY PROBLEM WAS ONE OF INFORMATION ABOUT AND ACCESS TO AN AIRCRAFT DIVERTED OR CRASHED IN EITHER OPEN OR CLOSED AREAS. PANAM REP STRESSED HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASSENGERS, CREW, CARGO AND DOWNS AIRCRAFT ITSELF.
 2. AKSENOV STATED SOVIET SIDE HAD HAD RECENT UNHAPPY EXPERIENCE OF THREE CRASHES AT SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT AND FULLY UNDERSTOOD OUR CONCERN. HE POINTED OUT THAT IN THESE THREE CASES ACCESS HAD BEEN GRANTED AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND OTHER MEASURES TAKEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CRASH.
 3. RESPECTING INFORMATION OF AN INCIDENT, AKSENOV PROMISED MCA WOULD INFORM EMBASSY AND PANAM IMMEDIATELY OF AN INCIDENT. HE REQUESTED US TO INFORM MCA ON OUR PART SHOULD WE LEARN OF INCIDENT BEFORE MINISTRY. HE PROVIDED TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF FOUR OFFICES WITHIN MCA JURISDICTION TO WHICH INFORMATION OF AN
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INCIDENT COULD BE PASSED AND FROM WHICH INFORMATION ABOUT AN INCIDENT COULD BE OBTAINED.

4. REGARDING ACCESS, AKSENOV REFERRED US TO AN MCA CIRCULAR TO ALL FOREIGN AIRLINE REPRESENTATIVES IN MOSCOW DATED MAY 10, 1972. THIS CIRCULAR HAD STATED APPROPRIATE AIRLINE REPS WOULD BE GRANTED IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO SITE OF INCIDENT. HE CORRECTED AMBIGUOUS PASSAGE IN THIS CIRCULAR WHICH SEEMD TO CONFIRM THIS ACCESS TO OPEN AREAS AND STATED THAT ACCESS WOULD BE GRANTED TO SITE WHETHER AREA WAS OPEN OR CLOSED. HE ADDED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF MCA WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ACCOMPANY AIRLINE REPS TO SITE.

5. AKSENOV THEN SAID THAT SOVIET REGULATIONS REQUIRED IMMEDIATE FORMATION OF AN INVESTIGATION COMMISSION SUBSEQUENT TO AN ACCIDENT. AS SOON AS EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND OTHER MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN AT SITE OF A CRASH RULES REQUIRED THAT SITE BE CHAINED OFF AND GUARDS POSTED SO THAT NOTHING WHATEVER COULD BE REMOVED FROM SITE WITHOUT EXPLICIT PERMISSION OF COMMISSION CHAIRMAN. AKSENOV REMARKED THAT MVD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING GUARD DETAIL. IN CASE OF RECENT JAL CRASH AKSENOV POINTED OUT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION HAD BEEN FORMED WITHIN 45 MINUTES. RESCUE AND OTHER EMERGENCY MEASURES HAD TAKEN ONLY 30 MINUTES. COMMISSION UPON ITS FORMATION IMMEDIATELY ESTABLISHED JURISDICTION OVER SITE AND COMPELLED ALL PERSONS EXCEPT GUARDS TO LEAVE AREA. THIS INCLUDED BOTH FOREIGNERS AND SOVIETS.

6. SOME DISCUSSION WAS HELD ABOUT FORM TODAY'S CONVERSATION COULD TAKE TO BE PART OF RECORD SO THERE WOULD BE LESS DANGER OF MISUNDERSTANDING WHAT HAD BEEN SAID. AKSENOV AGREED EMBASSY WOULD PROVIDE HIM WITH LETTER SUMMARIZING DISCUSSION AND THAT MCA WOULD IN TURN REPLY TO LETTER INDICATING IS CONCURRENCE. THIS IS WAY WE PLAN TO PROCEED.

7. COMMENT: AKSENOV APPEARED WELL VERSED ON MATTERS DISCUSSED. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THIS HE REPLIED HE HAD JUST COME FROM DUBROVNIK MEETING OF ICAO AT WHICH ACCESS PROBLEMS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED.
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